

Provo Canyon Road Plans Discussed At Women's Legislative Council Meet

"What magnitude of highway through Provo Canyon?" was the issue discussed at the meeting Thursday of the Women's Legislative Council. Presenting the discussion were Edwin E. Lovelace, engineer for District 6 State Road Commission, and D. Allan Firmage, chairman of the Provo Canyon Citizens Committee. Also present was Wayne Winters, member of the State Road Commission.

Mr. Firmage said he speaks both as a sportsman who knows every nook and bump in the canyon and is concerned for the environmental future of the canyon, and also as a structural engineer with considerable

experience in highway construction both in the United States and foreign countries. He is chairman of the engineering department at BYU.

Explaining that Congress has passed a bill stating that measures shall be taken to maintain or enhance the natural site and that highway construction shall not damage either the beauty of wildlife, Mr. Firmage said it is this assurance which the Provo Canyon Citizens Committee seeks from the Road Commission. He asks that the road commission consider all the uses of the canyon before beginning construction and present the facts to the people for approval. He said the

committee was formed to serve as a go-between. He emphasized that he does not care for controversy and does not want the issue to go into the courts, but he does hope for the support of the people in reaching a solution.

Mr. Firmage expressed his feelings that it is not worth destroying the beauty of the canyon to save a minute or two travel time. He said, however, his premise is not against a highway as such, but he asks, "What magnitude of Highway?"

Armed with a drawing of the proposed alignment as well as a scale model of a portion of the canyon, Mr. Lovelace said the new highway is designed as a two-lane 50 mph pavement at present, and that travel safety and quality of road construction have been the prime considerations. He said the commission plans to purchase right of ways at this time for widening so that the canyon need not be scarred a second time when the ultimate four-lane road is built.

Mr. Lovelace also assured Mr. Firmage and the council members that the highway department has taken great pains to make the new road compatible with the surroundings and to stay out of the river channel. Actually, he said, the channel in some sections of the river will be improved with the present plan, according to some experts. He also said that foliage would not be cut unnecessarily and that there would be planting to prevent erosion as well as for beauty. A separate landscaping contract would be let in the future, he said.

Explaining the need for the highway, Mr. Lovelace said studies show 4700 cars a day enter the canyon at Olmstead and as many as 13,000 per day have been counted during the peak season on weekends. Projected studies 20 years from now show at least 20,000 vehicles per day will use the canyon, the same volume as at the Point of the Mountain presently.

It costs more to consider the natural beauty of an area when building a road, Mr. Lovelace said. He estimates the first part of the road from Olmstead to Nunns at \$2½ million and from Nunns to Wildwood at \$3½ million. Designs are not completed from that point.

Because the governor has interceded with a request for a complete approved environmental study and report on the highway, construction will be delayed until late summer or fall, Mr. Lovelace said.

During a question and answer period, Lovelace assured the group that Wicks Rock would not be disturbed. He also said the old road will remain for slower travel and will be turned over to the county for maintenance.

Mr. Firmage said he hopes for a master plan to keep the canyon more beautiful and called for support of the people to keep it that way.

Following the discussion, President Pauline Olpin directed the council in selecting a nominating committee for new officers to be voted upon at the April 8 meeting. She said candidates also may be nominated from the floor at that meeting. Following elections a luncheon will be held at 12:30 at the Riverside Country Club. Tickets of \$3.25 may be purchased from Mrs. Clair Acord.

Guest speaker at the April meeting will be Richard Howe who will discuss the accomplishments of the 1971 legislature. Mrs. Olpin is chairman of the meeting.